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Appendix VIII.

[Vide Item V "Papers laid on the table of the House" at page 455 supra.

MEETINGS OF THE RETRENCHMENT COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CABINET CHAMBER IN THE SECRETARIAT, FORT ST. GEORGE, ON THE 21st TO 24th AND 26th OCTOBER 1931.

I. Press Communiqué, dated the 21st October 1931.

The Retrenchment Committee resumed their meetings this morning and made recommendations regarding the allowances in one or two departments, the details of which had not been received in time for inclusion at their last meeting in September.

2. The Committee then examined various subsidiary points that had arisen in the course of their previous discussions, including the question of extending the system of fixed travelling allowances and the distribution of fees for X-ray work between Government and the members of the staff. On the latter point they came to the conclusion that a larger proportion of fees should be credited to Government than is the case at present.

3. In the afternoon the Committee commenced a detailed examination of the large question of revising the rates of pay for future entrants to the various Provincial Services. Their examination on this subject will take several days to complete, and they will not be in a position to publish details until they come to final conclusions.

II. Press Communiqué, dated the 22nd October 1931.

The Retrenchment Committee this morning interviewed Major Webb, the Director of Public Health, as regards the possibility of amalgamating the posts of Public Analyst and Chemical Examiner. After hearing his views they decided that amalgamation would be impossible and that no immediate retrenchment could be secured in this way. On the other hand they expressed the view that local men should be trained to take the place eventually of the highly paid officers who perform the duties of these posts at present.

2. They then took up the question of the number of Assistant District Health Officers and Health Inspectors and, after hearing the views of the Director, decided to recommend that the former should be reduced by 6 and the latter by 10.

3. The Committee then examined Mr. Souter, Member of the Board of Revenue, regarding the question of jamabandi allowances. After hearing his views they came to the conclusion that economies of nearly Rs. 1,00,000 could be secured by restricting the number of village menials required to attend jamabandi camps and slightly reducing their allowance.

4. In the afternoon the Committee resumed their investigation of the rates of pay of future entrants to the Provincial Services.

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III. Press Communiqué, dated the 23rd October 1931.

After some further discussion on the question of the revision of pay of future entrants to the Provincial Services, the Committee decided to ask for certain revised proposals to be worked out and to defer further consideration of the question until they had completed the more urgent work of examining the expenditure in a number of important departments with a view to effecting immediate economies.

2. In pursuance of this decision the Committee took up the expenditure of the Excise department. Their discussion had not been concluded by the end of the day.

IV. Press Communiqué, dated the 24th October 1931.

The Committee this morning interviewed Major Howard, the Chief Engineer, Hydro-Electric Development, regarding the scale of expenditure at present incurred on the investigation of hydro-electric projects. They agreed with him that the five-year programme which will end next year should be worked out in full. They understand that when this has been done the Government will be equipped with a number of complete schemes which can be taken up for execution as funds permit and that further expenditure on investigation will be limited to the work on hydro-metric survey which will be necessary for some years to come.

2. The Committee also understand that Government are engaged in working out a scheme for amalgamating under a single head all the electrical activities now performed by the Hydro-Electric Department, the Electrical Inspector and the Electrical Engineer. The Committee agreed that such a scheme should be pursued with the object of co-ordinating the activities of Government and reducing expenditure by the amalgamation of staffs and the carrying out of routine inspections by less expensive agencies than those employed at present. Pending the formulation of a scheme on these lines, which should be expedited as much as possible, they recommended no further measure of retrenchment, except that the appointment of Junior Electrical Inspector to Government, which is now vacant, should continue to be held in abeyance.

3. The Committee also decided to call for a report from the Electrical Inspector showing the extent to which and the scale on which fees are at present levied for consultative work and for carrying out inspections under the Electricity Act, together with proposals for enhancing fees with the object of making the department more self-supporting than it is at present.

4. The Committee concluded their examination of the expenditure of the Excise department. They decided to recommend that the number of Deputy Commissioners should be reduced from 2 to 1, that the number of Assistant Commissioners should be reduced from 10 to 6 and that the experiment, which the Commissioner is now making, of reducing the number of Inspectors in charge of circles and forming sub-circles in charge of Assistant Inspectors, should be extended with the object of limiting the number of Inspectors as soon as possible to the number of

districts. This proposal would entail a reduction of about 40 Inspectors with a corresponding increase in the number of Assistant Inspectors and would result in considerable savings. The Committee also recommended certain reductions in the gazetted staff of the Commissioner's office. So far as the subordinate establishments are concerned, the Committee asked for further information as to the possibility of reducing the temporary staff of Sub-Inspectors, clerks and peons. Under the heading of 'Contingencies,' the Committee considered that a reduction of about 15 per cent might be made in the provision for rewards, clothing and equipment; and expressed the view that rewards should be given with reference to the quality rather than the quantity of the work done, and that they should not be given to the members of the department except in the most important cases. The Committee also considered that Government might examine the question whether it would not be cheaper to give Excise peons a small fixed travelling allowance instead of ordinary travelling allowances. As regards increase of revenue it was suggested that the system of charging fixed fees for petty hotel licences might be exchanged for a system of sale by tender. The Committee further recommended that the distillery selling price of arrack should be examined with reference to the fall in the cost of manufacture with a view to increasing the duty. The Committee also agreed that the system of granting remissions to the renters of shops to compensate them for alleged loss of revenue during the currency of their leases should be stopped.

V. Press communiqué, dated the 26th October 1931.

The Committee took up the expenditure of the Veterinary Department and examined the Director of Veterinary Services. While recommending no decrease in the number of officers in the department the Committee thought that some justifiable economy might be secured by a readjustment of the rates of pay between more important and less important posts.

2. As to establishments the Committee considered that Government should not spend any further money at present on building and opening new dispensaries and that those dispensaries which were not justifying the money that was being spent on them should be closed. New dispensaries in future should be paid for by the local bodies who require them and the question of inviting contributions from local bodies in aid of the existing institutions should also be considered.

3. The expansion of the activities of the department, when this again becomes possible, should be in the direction of appointing more touring assistants, but about one-quarter of the total number employed should be on a temporary footing so that the establishment may be capable of variation with the incidence of cattle disease.

4. Expenditure on the Veterinary College should be reduced by abolishing stipends and creating in their place a limited number of scholarships for students of depressed and backward communities. The ordinary students should also be required to pay fees. As a further means of securing revenue the Committee expressed the opinion that a

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small fee should be levied wherever possible for inoculations performed and recommended that Government should examine this question in consultation with the Director. The main possibility of retrenchment in this department lies in the manufacture of anti-rinderpest serum in Madras instead of buying it from the Government of India. The Committee understood that recent experiments had proved the practicability of this economy and they recommended for the urgent consideration of Government that the manufacture of serum in Madras should be started at the earliest possible date. The Committee are advised that the saving would amount to about Rs. 2 lakhs a year.

5. In the afternoon the Committee examined the Registrar of Co-operative Societies regarding the expenditure of his department. They eventually decided to recommend that the number of Deputy Registrars should be reduced by two and that the grade of Sub-Deputy Registrars should be abolished and replaced by a superior grade of Inspectors. The Committee further agreed that the subsidies now given to District Federations and the Provincial Co-operative Union should be withdrawn, and that three of the six training institutes should cease to receive Government assistance. They also considered that there might be some increase in the number of societies from whom audit fees are collected. Finally they decided to recommend that the Deputy Director of Agriculture who has recently been appointed to work in the Co-operative department should be withdrawn with effect from the beginning of the next financial year and that the present post of Joint Registrar should be abolished.

FORT. ST. GEORGE,
29th October 1931.

G. R. F. TOTTENHAM,
Retrenchment Secretary.

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